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AUTHOR	Stinson, E. W.
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ABSTRACT

Presented is a report of the teacher internship program at the College of Education, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon. The internship program is defined, and a brief description of its nature and development is offered. Methods and criteria for selecting participating schools are detailed as are the resulting program changes. Current practices and future projections are also outlined. (JB)

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INTERNSHIP, SASKATOON

A report on the development of Internship Programs in the College of Education, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon from 1964 to the present.

This is not an attempt to 'sell' internship, nor to examine the whole area of internship versus other experiential techniques. It is basically what the title states - a report of internship at the College of Education, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon.

In preparing this report I have leaned heavily upon the material gathered by members of the Internship Committee of the University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, under the chairmanship of Assistant Dean J. C. Bates. In addition to Assistant Dean Bates the committee consisted of Mr. C. Peters, Chief Superintendent of Schools; Mr. R. Richert, Executive Assistant, Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation and Dr. J. W. Tait, Saskatchewan School Trustees Association. The makeup of the committee is indicative of one of the most important aspects of the program. Represented are the Department of Education, the Teachers' Federation, the Trustees Association and the College of Education. It has been this four way involvement of concerned groups that has contributed much to the continuation and extension of internship programs in the College of Education.

There may be some confusion as to the use of the term 'Internship'. This has different meanings to different people and perhaps a good starting point would be to clarify the use of this term in connection with the Saskatoon program. In the Forty-Seventh Yearbook of The Association for Student Teaching, internship is defined as "an integral part of the professional preparation of the teacher candidate, having been preceded by successful observation, participation and student teaching or equivalent experiences in a school environment, and is planned and coordinated by the teacher education institution in cooperation with one or more school systems. The intern is contracted and paid by a local school board...[1]

[1] Southward, Horton C., Editor, Internships in Education, Washington, D.C., Association for Student Teaching, 47th Yearbook 1968, p. xi.

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Webster's New Third International Dictionary defines an intern as "An advanced student or a recent graduate in a professional field (as teaching) who is getting practical experience under the supervision of an experienced worker." It is interesting to note that Webster uses teaching as an example of an intern rather than medicine, with which interns have traditionally been identified.

In its initial stages the internship program in Saskatoon did involve payment of the interns, subsequent developments removed the payments and substituted class credits. Internship then as identified at Saskatoon is an integral part of the professional preparation of the teacher candidate; it is not always preceded by successful observation, participation and student teaching; it is planned and coordinated by the teacher education institution in cooperation with various school systems; and the intern was, but is no longer, contracted and paid by a local school board. Indeed the length of time involved in this type of field experience is probably the main factor which distinguishes internship from what has been commonly known as student teaching.

Internship for our purposes was considered as a period of full-time teaching experience, prior to certification, under supervision of the principals, superintendents, sponsoring teachers and University supervisors for a continuous period of not less than one semester (4 month term).

EARLY DEVELOPMENTS

In May 1963 an Internship Committee was set up by the Board of Teacher Education to plan for the inclusion of a period of internship, as defined, in the Diploma program at the College of Education in Saskatoon. The committee was carefully structured so as to include representatives from the agencies most directly concerned, namely the Department of Education, the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association, the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation and the College of Education.

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The Diploma program, more recently changed to the B.Ed. A.D. program, was open to graduates of other Colleges who, after a year in the College of Education which included two three-week periods of student teaching, received a teaching certificate.

The committee proposed the introduction of a Diploma Internship program to commence in May 1964.

THE NATURE OF THE DIPLOMA INTERNSHIP COURSE

The course was divided into four parts: an intersession (May-June), a summer session (July-August), a fall term (September-December), and a winter term (January-April).

Students enrolled in the course undertook three full classes in Education during a combined intersession-summer school period. During the fall term one half the students moved into schools as interns while the other half continued with classes in the College to complete the class requirements for the Professional Certificate. In the winter term the groups were reversed. Thus the students were paired in September and exchanged places in January.

While in the schools, the College of Education maintained a continuous contact with each intern through regular seminar sessions. The supervising teacher appointed by the principal of the cooperating school provided direct day to day supervision of the intern's work in the classroom.

The interns were awarded a probationary teaching certificate for the period of time they were in the schools. They were paid at the beginning rate of the Class III level of teacher's salaries for the system in which they were working. In effect, no intern received less than three hundred and seventy five dollars per month for the four month internship period.

School boards were able to reclaim most of this stipend from the Department of Education through teacher and equalization grant formulas. As interns were permitted to serve as substitute teachers for up to ten days of the internship period, this saving to the boards further reduced the additional costs.

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SELECTION OF PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

The selection of schools to participate was based on applications from interested boards. In order to qualify the schools had to meet the following requirements.

(1) The school must have a staff of at least eight teachers. The majority of the teachers on staff must have at least a professional certificate.

(2) An intern's supervising teacher must hold a professional certificate and have a major (four full classes) in the subject which he is supervising.

(3) A school must offer sufficient classes in the intern's subject area to enable the intern to spend most of his teaching time in his major subject area.

(4) An intern does not replace a regular staff member; he is considered an addition to the regular staff.

School boards were notified of this program and were advised that they could participate by either (1) nominating interns to be placed in the schools under their jurisdiction, or (2) agreeing to accept an intern nominated by the College of Education and acceptable to the school principal and superintendent concerned. Information regarding the program was forwarded to school boards throughout the province and application forms were made available to be returned to the College of Education by those boards which were interested. The participating schools were selected in consultation with an Advisory Committee of the Board of Teacher Education which included representatives of the Department of Education, the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association and the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation.

Enrolment in the program for the first year was not too encouraging, 31 of 142 students in the Diploma year elected to participate in the Diploma Internship program as outlined.

During 1965-66 a number of changes were introduced. All of the students went into the schools as interns during the fall term rather than half in the fall and half in the spring. The stipend was reduced to a flat $1,000.00 as remuneration for the four months internship period. Government grants paid 80% of this, the balance being paid by the local school board.

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Students were not awarded Probationary Teaching Certificates during their internship period but were classed as student teachers and received one class credit for completing a successful internship period. During this year there were a total of thirty interns as compared with 128 in the regular Diploma program.

In January 1968 the Department of Education announced that grants for the internship program would be withdrawn leaving the program, as it then existed, fundless.

Convinced of the value of internship, the committee undertook to restructure the program without payment to interns. Step one was to consolidate the total package into the regular academic year. Step two was to grant two credits for the successful completion of the internship requirement. Step three was to adjust the required courses and to add half class offerings in the College.

The result was an Internship Course with the following characteristics:

(1) The course could be completed within the academic year.

(2) It was divided into two parts: (a) the campus term and (b) the internship term.

(3) During the campus term the students were enrolled in six half-classes and one full methodology class which was carried for the full year.

(4) In the internship term the students served full time as interns in Saskatoon secondary schools.

(5) One half the interns began their courses by enrolling in the internship term; the remaining students take the class requirements outlined for the campus term.

(6) By the end of the year the students had completed six half classes and one full class plus receiving two class credits for internship.

(7) Neither the interns, nor the supervising teachers received any pay.

Forty two students elected to take the internship option, the highest number to make this selection in the five years that internship had been offered. Evidently the concentration of the program into the regular university year made it a more attractive option than did the payment of $1,000.00 with a longer time involvement.

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The numbers increased to 93 in 1969-70 which about exhausted the possible placements within the city of Saskatoon. The Internship Committee decided to expand the area of possible intern placements to include the northern half of Saskatchewan as agreed to in consultation with the expanding Regina Campus.

In 1970-71, 107 interns were placed in Saskatoon schools and 33 were accommodated in other locations some over 200 miles from the campus.

The apparent popularity of the internship route and its advantages, assumed or evident, over student teaching led to the adoption of this form of field experience in the Secondary Four Year Program. As a result, in 1971-72 space was required for approximately 100 more interns.

It was decided that all secondary four year interns would be placed in internship during the fall, and that a sufficient number of the B.Ed. A.D. students would be added to the fall group to make the total number of interns in the fall and winter terms about equal. Eventually 106 students interned in the fall of 1971, 67 in the city and 39 outside. In the winter term Saskatoon schools accepted 108 interns, 31 of whom were in elementary schools. Thirty seven interns were assigned to schools outside of the city.

CURRENT PRACTICES

I. Selection of Schools.

With the cooperation of the Department of Education and the Teachers' Federation a brochure is forwarded to all high schools in the northern part of the province in January outlining the current internship program and inviting applications for interns in the forthcoming year. The procedures outlined are (1) that individual teachers indicate to their principal their interest in working with an intern, (2) the principal assesses the applications and decides how many interns may be accommodated in each term, (3) the principals' recommendations are forwarded to the superintendent of schools and from him to the College of Education.

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At the College of Education the applications are reviewed by a selection committee consisting of the regional superintendents, a representative of the S.T.F. and the Director of Student Teaching. The final approved list is made available to the program directors for use in assigning students for internship.

For 1972-73 a total of 211 applications, covering both terms, have been approved in Saskatoon schools and 269 from schools outside the city. The requests for interns far exceeds the combined numbers of interns in both programs. This is an extremely gratifying response on the part of the teaching profession. It indicates to the College the overall willingness of teachers to accept the responsibility of supervising interns as a part of their professional responsibilities. It may also indicate the value of having an intern as an additional staff member.

II. Assigning Students to Intern Positions.

The Directors of the B.Ed. A.D. and Secondary B.Ed. programs undertake to assign students to the positions available. Students are given a reasonably free choice of location, but are expected to select positions in the subject areas in which they have a major (at least four classes).

A system of priorities has had to be established with regard to allocations to Saskatoon schools as most students would appear to prefer placement in the city. Married students usually receive first priority in this regard.

When the students have been assigned, a data sheet is sent to the school covering the students' background, major areas of interest, classes taken, additional skills and related experience. The students assigned to fall internship are advised to contact the principal as soon as possible and arrange through him to meet his supervising teacher. As a staff member the intern is expected to be on hand from the opening of the fall term and to participate in whatever pre-planning meetings may be involved.

Students assigned to winter internship delay this initial contact until the fall.

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III. Supervision

The cooperating teacher carries the heaviest load in supervising the intern. Assisting are the principal of the school and the College supervisor assigned to that area. College supervisors are mostly regular staff members who may or may not have their teaching loads reduced to allow time for supervision.

Within the city of Saskatoon the supervision provided by the College is directed toward the teaching major of the interns. The School of Physical Education supervise the Physical Education majors, the College of Home Economics the Home Economics interns, as far as possible the Language Arts people look after the English majors, and so on. Outside Saskatoon the College supervisors are expected to look after interns in all subjects within a given area as the costs both in time and money would prevent sending subject area people into widespread locations. The underlying aspect of supervision in developmental Evaluation is an essential but soft-pedalled responsibility.

Each student receives a final rating on a student placement profile, copies of which are available at the request of employing agencies. Grading for credit purposes is on a pass-fail basis.

IV. Improvement of Supervision

Various programs have been undertaken in attempts to improve and expand the supervisory functions of the cooperating teachers and the College supervisors. Initially conferences of cooperating teachers and College personnel were held in Saskatoon and in several centres easily accessible to the cooperating teachers. Expectations, roles, procedures and a general exchange of ideas and experiences characterized these earlier meetings. More recently there have been a series of seminars in which the interns have also been involved. Leadership and finances for these have been shared jointly by the S.T.F. and the College of Education,. The development of effective communication between interns and supervisors has been the main thrust, hopefully, towards providing a more effective internship experience.

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FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

The faculty of the College of Education, the cooperating teachers and their principals, and the interns are most positive toward the continuation of internship in the Secondary and Diploma programs. Pressures are being exerted to extend the present two year Standard A Elementary program to three years and to include a similar internship component.

We are informed by the employing agencies that students coming through the internship route are much better prepared to start their teaching careers. Some estimates indicate that it takes a non-intern newly certificated teacher three years to catch up to his internship developed fellow neophyte.

The acceptance of the program is obvious when one considers that both the numbers of students electing internship (where such a choice is available) and the numbers of teachers expressing their willingness to accept interns has increased remarkably. Over 90% of the students who have a choice, choose internship even though it adds an additional expense burden for many. As was indicated earlier, the number of placement opportunities for interns far exceeds the number of students in the two Secondary programs.

IN SUMMARY

Internship is apparently firmly entrenched as a part, at least, of the field experience of students undertaking professional preparation as teachers at the secondary level in the College of Education, Saskatoon Campus. Indications are that it will be extended to all teacher education programs in the very near future.

The supervision of interns is accepted by the teaching profession as a professional responsibility for which no extra compensation is provided. In fact teachers have been willing, on their own time, to attend internship seminars and workshops.

The full involvement of all parties in planning for and evaluating internship programs has contributed much to their continued development

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and acceptance. The programs are actually under the direction of an internship committee consisting of representatives from the Department of Education, the Teachers' Federation, the Trustees Association, the principals and teachers and interns.

While a very positive acceptance is evident, there are many problems still to be solved. The availability of College supervisors and the necessary melding of theory and practice need improvement. Pre-preparation for internship by way of student teaching, simulation techniques or micro teaching could more effectively prepare the students for internship. Not essential to the program, but of some concern, is the problem of additional expense to the intern, particularly those who cannot be accommodated in Saskatoon.

Of continuing interest is the development of short courses and full term classes in supervision from which might be recruited an expanding group of successful practitioners who can serve as qualified intern supervisors in the schools.

The program is by no means perfect, that it works without excessively high cost factors, that it is accepted by students and the profession, and that employing agencies seem to prefer the product all point towards the continuation of internship in the current programs of teacher education offered at the Saskatoon Campus, University of Saskatchewan.

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May 29, 1972.